

NSC BRIEFING

13 February 1959

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MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

- I. In a cabinet reshuffle last weekend Qasim got rid of six ministers who were favorably disposed toward Nasir and opposed Qasim's pro-Communist policies. By making 10 new appointments Qasim presumably thought he had consolidated his own position by killing two birds with one stone:
 - A. He brought into cabinet 6 civilians and 2 military officers he thought would be more amenable to his control;
 - B. He also brought in 2 officers not wholly sympathetic to his policy, but who were thereby removed from important military posts, where they were potentially more dangerous.
 - C. However, unity of the new cabinet is already threatened. The propaganda minister submitted his resignation on 10 February after Qasim ordered the reopening of a Communist newspaper which had been suspended by the propaganda minister.

- II. In Kuwait, nationalist and pro-UAR pressures are building up and becoming threat to Ruler in Iraq.

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- A. Ruler thinking of joining Arab League as way of appeasing Nasir and populace in Kuwait.

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B.

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